

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 0456

EXDIS

FOR HARTMAN FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, TU, GR, CY
SUBJECT: TIMING OF ACTION ON DCA

1. IN THE COURSE OF A GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE TURKISH PARLIAMENTARY SITUATION LAST EVENING (JANUARY 19) WITH FORMER PRIMIN ECEVIT, HE TOLD ME THAT HE THOUGH THE END OF MARCH WAS A REALISTIC DEADLINE AFTER WHICH IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO GET THE TURKISH PARLIAMENTARIANS TO FOCUS ON THE DCA OR ANY OTHER SERIOUS LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS. HE SAID IT WAS ALREADY BECOMING VERY DIFFICULT FOR ANY OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES, INCLUDING HIS OWN, TO GET A QUORUM AT THEIR WEEKLY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP CONFERENCES.

2. THERE HAS BEEN INCREASING TALK HERE IN THE LAST WEEK OR SO ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE CURRENT DEMIREL COALITION IS SOON TO SPLIT APART. THE FALL OF THE GOVERNMENT UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, WHETHER OR NOT ACCOMPANIED BY A DECISION FOR EARLY ELECTIONS, COULD, AS YOU KNWO, EFFECTIVELY PARALYZE TURKISH ACTIONS REGARDING BOTH CYPRUS AND THE DCA FOR MONTHS TO COME. IN VIEW OF THE RUMORS, I ASKED ECEVIT WHAT HE THOUGH THE PROSPECTS WERE FOR THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT FALLING
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EITHER IN THE DAYS IMMEDIATELY AHEAD OR, IN ANY EVENT, AT SOME POINT PRIOR TO THE ELECTIONS. ECEVIT CONFIRMED THAT IT WAS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT THE DEMIREL COALITION WOULD SPLIT UP AND COLLAPSE AT ANY POINT, BUT HE ADDED THAT WHETHER IT WILL, OR WHEN IT WILL, "NO ONE REALLY KNOWS". HE SAID HE THOUGHT THAT DEMIREL'S TWO MOST IMPORTANT COALITION PARTNERS (ERBAKAN

AND HIS NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY AND FEYZIOGLU AND HIS REPUBLICAN RELIANCE PARTY) WANTED OUT OF THE COALITION BUT DID NOT WANT RESPONSIBILITY FOR BRINGING THE GOVERNMENT DOWN. WHEN I COMMENTED THAT MANY POLITICAL OBSERVERS HAD TOLD ME THAT ERBAKAN WAS POLITICALLY BETTER OFF TO CONTINUE IN OFFICE, ECEVIT SAID THAT ERBAKAN AGREED WITH THIS - EXCEPT THAT ERBAKAN DID NOT REPEAT NOT THINK IT WAS TO HIS ADVANTAGE TO STAY IN A GOVERNMENT LED BY DEMIREL. ERBAKAN APPARENTLY BELIEVES, CONFIRMED ECEVIT, THAT DEMIREL IS GETTING MORE DOMESTIC POLITICAL ADVANTAGE THAN ERBAKAN OUT OF THE CONTINUED LIFE OF THIS CURRENT GOVERNMENT, WHICH IS WORRISOME TO ERBAKAN AS THE DEMIREL AND ERBAKAN PARTIES BASICALLY SEEK THEIR SUPPORT FROM OVERLAPPING SECTORS OF THE ELECTORATE.

3. COMMENT: ECEVIT'S LATE-MARCH TIME LIMIT REPRESENTS A SHORTER DEADLINE THAN THE ONE PRIME MINISTER DEMIREL HAS MENTIONED TO ME OR FORMER COUNCILOR CAGLAYANGIL AND AMBASSADOR ESENBEL HAVE MENTIONED TO FORMER SECRETARY KISSINGER AND TO YOU. AS YOU KNOW FROM MY OWN EARLIER COMMENTS, I TEND TO THINK THE ECEVIT ESTIMATE IS THE MORE REALISTIC, ALTHOUGH THERE COULD PERHAPS BE SOME SLIPPAGE BEYOND HIS CUT-OFF DATE.

4. AS FOR THE LIFE OF THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT, THERE IS SIMPLY NO WAY OF TELLING AT THIS POINT HOW MUCH LONGER IT WILL LAST. WHILE MY GUESS CONTINUES TO BE THAT IT WILL ENDURE TO THE ELECTION PERIOD, OR VERY CLOSE TO IT, CONFIDENTIAL

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THE FACT THAT WE COULD INSTEAD HAVE A MUCH EARLIER GOVERNMENT CRISIS AND PARALYSIS IS OBVIOUSLY ANOTHER REASON FOR MOVING AHEAD WITH CYPRUS AND DCA EFFORTS AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE. MACOMBER

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